

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO WHITE HOUSE IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 255544

NODIS

FOR DR. BRZEZINSKI

FOLLOWING REPEAT AMMAN 7812 ACTION SECSTATE OCT 25.

QUOTE: S E C R E T AMMAN 7812

NODIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PGOV, PORG, JO, US, XF

SUBJECT: COURT CHIEF SHARAF, JORDANIAN VIEWS ON WORKING PAPER

SUMMARY: SHARAF BRIEFED ME ON JORDANIAN REACTIONS
TO WORKING PAPER, SUGGESTIONS FOR POSSIBLE CHANGE,
AND WE DISCUSSED TIMING AND TACTICS OF POSSIBLE
NEXT STEPS IN THE AREA. (SEPTTEL COVERS SHARAF'S
EGYPT AND SYRIA VISITS.) JORDANIANS WILL GIVE US
FORMAL REPLY IN FORM OF LETTER FROM KING TO PRESIDENT
IN NEXT FEW DAYS. JORDANIANS WILL RESTATE ADHERENCE
TO SOME BASIC POLICY POSITIONS--UNIFIED ARAB DELEGA-
TION, FUNCTIONAL WORKING GROUPS, AND TIE THIS TO
PRESIDENT'S SUBSTANTIVE STATEMENTS ON MIDDLE EAST

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WHICH THEY BELIEVE HAVE TO BE LINKED TO PROCEDURAL
PAPER. SPECIFICALLY, JORDANIANS OBJECT TO "JEWISH
REFUGEES" BEING INTRODUCED INTO CURRENT WORKING PAPER.
THEY ALSO ACCEPT NEED FOR BILATERAL CONSIDERATION OF
CERTAIN SUBJECTS. JORDANIANS ALSO LIKE DROPPING OF
ANY MENTION OF PLO AND HOPE WE WILL STICK FIRM ON THAT
POINT. SHARAF BELIEVES IT IS NOW UP TO THE U.S. TO

REVISE PAPER TO REFLECT ARAB VIEWS AND SUGGESTIONS. HE THOUGHT AT A MINIMUM WE MIGHT LOOK TO POSSIBILITY OF AGENDA FOR GENEVA COVERING THREE MAIN QUESTIONS-- TERRITORY, PEACE, AND PALESTINIANS--WHICH COULD BE CONSIDERED BY WHOLE CONFERENCE. BILATERAL GROUPS COULD BE RELATED SPECIFICALLY TO SUCH BILATERAL QUESTIONS AS WITHDRAWALS AND RELATED ARRANGEMENTS. JORDAN WANTS PALESTINIANS AND WEST BANK-GAZA ISSUES RELINKED AND COVERED IN A WIDER FORUM. ON TIMING, SHARAF IS CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES AT COMING NOVEMBER 12 AL FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING IN TUNIS AND HOPES WE CAN HAVE REVISED DRAFT IN CIRCULATION TO ARABS BEFORE THAT TIME AS ONE WAY TO STAVE OFF NEGATIVE ACTIVITIES IN THAT FORUM. END SUMMARY.

1. I SAW SHARAF AT HIS REQUEST OCTOBER 25 WHEN HE GAVE ME A READOUT ON HIS RECENT TRIP TO SYRIA AND EGYPT WHERE HE SAW ASAD AND SADAT ON BEHALF OF THE KING (SEPTTEL). IN ADDITION, HE DISCUSSED GOJ REACTION TO WORKING PAPER (WP) AND NEXT STEPS.

2. SHARAF NOTED THAT JORDAN VIEWS WP IN POSITIVE SENSE AND IS MORE INTERESTED IN SUBSTANCE OF PROBLEM AND IN GETTING NEGOTIATIONS GOING THAN IN PROCEDURAL SPECIFICS OF WP. HOWEVER JORDAN RECOGNIZED THAT SITUATION NOW IS PARTICULARLY DELICATE. IN THIS LIGHT IT WILL IN NEXT
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FEW DAYS PRESENT US WITH LETTER TO PRESIDENT CONTAINING FORMAL RESPONSE TO PRESIDENT'S LETTER FROWARDING WP TO KING AND INCLUDE A NUMBER OF POINTS.

3. SHARAF SAID REPLY IS NOT YET FINALLY CLEARED BY KING, BUT IN ORAL PREVIEW HE NOTED THAT AGAINST BACKGROUND OF GOJ FULL ACCEPTANCE OF U.S. STRATEGY THAT IT IS NECESSARY TO GET TO GENEVA TO GET NEGOTIATING PROCESS STARTED, GOJ WILL PRESENT NUMBER OF COMMENTS. FIRST, HE NOTED THAT JORDAN PREFERS UNIFIED ARAB DELEGATION AND HAVING CONFERENCE BREAK DOWN INTO FUNCTIONAL GROUPS. IT WILL NOT OPPOSE U.S. PREFERENCE FOR BILATERAL GROUPS IN SPITE OF ITS OWN STATED PREFERENCES. IT BELIEVES THAT THE INTRODUCTION OF THE NOTION OF JEWISH REFUGEES IS A MASSIVE RED-HERRING (THEY HAVE NEVER BEEN RECOGNIZED BY THE UN AND THEY CAN GO BACK WHERE THEY CAME FROM) AS IS IDEA OF ARAB REFUGEES (WHO ARE IN FACT ONLY PALESTINIAN REFUGEES, HE SAID) AND THEREFORE THEY MAY SUGGEST A SPECIFIC CHANGE IN THAT POINT OF THE PAPER. HE ADDED THAT JORDAN WILL TRY TO ESCHEW SPECIFIC WORDING SUGGESTIONS AND LET U.S. DECIDE HOW TO HANDLE MATTERS IN TERMS OF SPECIFICS.

4. HE ALSO LEFT ME WITH CLEAR IMPRESSION THAT GOJ WOULD NOT BE HAPPY TO HAVE PLO INTRODUCED INTO PAPER AS IT WAS IN FIRST DRAFT ("NOT WELL-KNOWN MEMBERS OF PLO") AND STRONGLY PREFERS "PALESTINIAN" PHRASEOLOGY. POINT HE MADE HERE IS THAT WITH PALESTINIANS NEGOTIATING FOR PALESTINIAN RIGHTS AND EXERCISE OF SELF-DETERMINATION AT SOME POINT IN THE FUTURE, IT IS BETTER FOR THE PLO TO MAKE ITS OWN WAY WITH ITS SUPPORTERS RATHER THAN TO HAVE IT IMPOSED ON THE PALESTINIANS AS PART OF THE PROCEDURAL BASIS FOR GENEVA. IN THE LONG RUN IF THE PLO HAS TO BE MENTIONED, IT SHOULD BE DONE IN ORAL SIDE UNDERSTANDINGS ONLY. (COMMENT: I FEEL SURE HERE SHARAF ALSO
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REFLECTS THE KING'S VIEWS.)

5. AS WE PROCEEDED FURTHER, SHARAF DISCUSSED NEXT STEPS. HE SAID THAT ALL OF THE ARABS ARE NOW LOOKING TO THE U.S. FOR THE NEXT MOVE SINCE THEY ALL HAVE OR SOON (WITH JORDAN) WILL HAVE GIVEN US THEIR VIEWS. ON THE PAPER, HE BELIEVES IT IS NECESSARY FOR THE U.S. TO MAKE CHANGES. TO MEET ESPECIALLY SYRIAN VIEWS, HE SUGGESTS THE ADDITION OF THE NOTION OF AN AGENDA TO BE CONSIDERED BY THE FULL CONFERENCE INCLUDING THE THREE MAJOR ISSUES--WITHDRAWAL/TERRITORY, PEACE MEASURES AND THE PALESTINIANS. AS REPORTED ELSEWHERE, ASAD TOLD SHARAF THAT "IMPLEMENTATION" OF WITHDRAWALS COULD BE DISCUSSED BILATERALLY. SHARAF FEELS THIS IS AN OPENING TO KEEP BILATERAL NEGOTIATING GROUPS AND THAT IN SOME FORM SYRIANS COULD BE BROUGHT ALONG. JORDAN ACCEPTED NOTION THAT BILATERAL QUESTIONS (WITHDRAWALS AND RELATED ISSUES) SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BILATERALLY, AND COLLECTIVE ISSUES (PEACE MEASURES AND PALESTINIANS) SHOULD BE CONSIDERED COLLECTIVELY. HE ALSO SAID THAT BOTH SYRIA AND JORDAN WOULD PREFER COMBINING THE PALESTINIAN REFUGEES, WEST BANK/GAZA QUESTIONS INTO A SINGLE TOPIC FOR MULTILATERAL CONSIDERATION, WHETHER IN A PLENARY OR A SUBGROUP, AND THAT THIS SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE U.S. HE HAD NOTHING TO SAY ON PALESTINIAN REPRESENTATION EXCEPT TO NOTE THAT ASAD HAD INDICATED THAT SUBSTANCE OF GAINING PALESTINIAN RIGHTS WAS MORE IMPORTANT THAN WHO REPRESENTED THE PALESTINIANS AND THAT IF WE STUCK ON THIS POINT, HE BELIEVES WE CAN WIN THROUGH WITH THE OTHER ARABS.

6. NOT ONLY DID SHARAF NOTE THE SENSITIVITY AND DELICACY OF THE PRESENT SITUATION AND ESPECIALLY
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THE SYRIAN POSITION, BUT ALSO TIMING. HE SAID THAT ASAD WAS NOT UNRESPONSIVE TO JORDANIAN SUGGESTIONS OF A CONFRONTATION STATE SUMMIT, BUT ALSO RECALLED THE ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS' MEETING COMING UP ON NOVEMBER 12. HE STATED, IN RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM ME, THAT THE U.S. SHOULD TRY TO GET SOMETHING BACK TO THE ARABS AND ESPECIALLY SYRIA ("KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH WITH SYRIA") BEFORE THAT TIME. IDEALLY SOMETHING CLOSER TO THE FIRST DRAFT WE HAD GIVEN THEM WOULD BE BEST. IF THE ISRAELIS WERE HOWLING ABOUT A NEW DRAFT ON NOVEMBER 12 THAT WOULD NOT HURT. THE U.S. WOULD NOT WANT THE ARAB LEAGUE TUNIS FM MEETING TO BECOME IN REGARD TO WP WHAT RABAT SUMMIT HAD BECOME IN REGARD TO WEST BANK DISENGAGEMENT NEGOTIATIONS IN 1974. ANOTHER DRAFT CERTAINLY WOULD BE REQUIRED AND COULD HELP CONFRONTATION STATES AVOID A RIFT AND/OR THE ARAB LEAGUE FOREIGN MINISTERS TAKING OVER THE TACTICAL LEAD IN THE PROBLEM. SHARAF IS VERY WORRIED IN THIS REGARD THAT KHADDAM'S CURRENT TRIP TO THE GULF IS TO OPEN UP AN ANTI-EGYPTIAN CAMPAIGN OF SOME SORT, A CONCERN WHICH HE SAID SADAT FELT KEENLY TWO DAYS AGO WHEN THEY TALKED TOGETHER.

7. AS FOR WHAT JORDAN WILL DO NEXT, THERE WERE TWO OPTIONS. FIRST TO GE BACK TO THE SYRIANS, TELL THEM OF EGYPTIAN NERVOUSNESS AND TRY TO GE THEM NOT TO OPEN UP A COMPAIGN AGAINST EGYPT IN THE GULF AND ELSEWHERE, GIVEN THE NEED TO PRESERVE ARAB UNITY ABOVE ALL NOW WHEN SITUATION IS POISED SO DELICATELY. SECOND THOUGHT IS TO TALK TO THE SAUDIS ABOUT WHAT THEY CAN DO. THIS MIGHT HELP, BUT THE SAUDIS WERE NOT LIKELY TO BE VERY AGGRESSIVE OR PUSHY. THEY COULD PROBABLY BE MADE TO SEE THE CONSEQUENCES OF FAILURE AND THE NEED FOR THEIR OWN ROLE, BUT THEY WERE MUCH HARDER TO MOVE.

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HE SAID JORDAN WOULD PROBABLY TRY TO TAKE UP BOTH OPTIONS, BUT DID NOT HOLD OUT REAL HOPE FOR SUCCESS. JORDAN REALLY WANTED A CONFRONTATION STATE SUMMIT TO BRING POSITIONS TOGETHER, BUT IT WAS UNLIKELY TO GET THIS. HE LEFT ME SAYING AGAIN THAT IT WAS IMPORTANT FOR US TO KEEP IN TOUCH WITH SYRIA.

8. IN AN ASIDE IN OUR CONVERSATION, SHARAF ALSO
REMARKED ON THE TACTICS OF OUR PRESENTATION OF THE
WP. HE SAID THAT THE ARABS ARE STILL UPSET,
ESPECIALLY SYRIA, ABOUT TWO OR THREE ASPECTS OF
WHAT HAPPENED. THEY THOUGHT WE SHOULD NOT HAVE
NEGOTIATED OUT THE DOCUMENT WITH THE ISRAELIS AT
SUCH A HIGH LEVEL; IT HURT THE PRESIDENT'S CREDIBILITY
WITH SYRIA IN PARTICULAR. ALSO THEY FELT THAT THE
DOCUMENT SHOULD HAVE BEEN WORKED OUT FURTHER WITH
THE ARABS BEFORE GOING FINAL WITH THE ISRAELI CABINET. FINALLY,
ISRAELI CABINET ACCEPTANCE NOW MORE OR LESS IMPELLED ARABS LIKE ASAD
TO SEEK CHANGES, IF ONLY TO AVOID ACCEPTING AN "ISRAELI DOCUMENT."
HE ADDED THAT THE ARABS EXPECTED AND BELIEVED THAT
THE U.S. WAS STILL WILLING TO TRY TO WORK OUT
FURTHER DRAFTS WITH THE ARAB STATES.
PICKERING UNQUOTE VANCE

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